

January 18, 1957

Dr/ Clifford Grobstein
National Cancer Institute
Bethesda 14, Md.

Dear Cliff:

I am sorry that we are not likely to see you during the critical next few weeks. Actually, I have also retired from the NSF panel too, as it came too close to a trip we are planning to Paris and England in early March, and what with the other things on our minds now, the homework would have been a heavy burden too.

Please don't quote me on any of the following, because we haven't definitely made up our minds, but I felt I owe you my best impressions.

There is this complication. In addition to Stanford, I am entertaining two other possibilities: one, at the medical school here for a possible expanded development along the lines of medical genetics (*sensu lato*); the other a professorship in the genetics department at Berkeley, in many ways an opposite number to my position here, but slightly more expensive, and on a new and interesting campus. You can imagine the turmoil we're in (I'm not mentioning the easy ones, that would mean moving to such Siberias as Philadelphia.) At this instant, it seems like a tossup between Berkeley and Madison-- Esther and I are having a tough job making up our minds. There is a problem of 'anti-nepotism' rules at Berkeley-- the people there assure us that they can work out a happy solution, but we haven't seen just what it will be yet. In the shuffle, Stanford seems somewhat less attractive --mostly on account of microbiology being rather limited (Van Niel is at Pacific Grove and about as accessible to Berkeley as to Stanford)-- but we haven't reached the point of ruling it out altogether. The Biochemistry is another factor: there will be a brand new department, which Ed Tatum was to have led, but the medical school is taking its time about setting it up. Some of the names that some of the people there are bandying about as whom they would like to have are quite exciting (two of the best are present or former NIH'ers). But it isn't there now. If some further hitch develops at Berkeley, and you were to agree to Stanford, and ~~then~~ there were some action apparent on Biochem., we would want to look again at Stanford; being a private institution, and having some lead time, Stanford was able to make an inherently very satisfactory offer, and no other ifs or buts. The fringe benefits there, retirement and faculty housing, as well as 'free quarters' each year, are also very attractive. But for my own particular field, Stanford does not yet seem to have the intellectual environment that Berkeley can offer; I may be overrating this, and as we get older, the lower-pressure system at Palo Alto may seem increasingly more attractive.

Now, as you know, Berkeley is about a 75-minute drive from Palo Alto, and there has not been a great deal of intercourse. However, we have friends that we value at both places, and if we do move west, we strongly hope to increase that traffic. So if you did decide to accept Stanford, this would be another inducement for us to take either job.

Twitty impresses me as an able person, in all his capacities--- you must know him professionally better than I do. The rest of the department is not so very aggressive in experimental work, and it is obvious that in considering two such costly (I didn't say good) appointments as you and I would represent, the department and the university are making a strong bid to upgrade their experimental biology. If they could continue that sustained effort over some time, they are bound to get places. If I were an organized-minded person now, I would see Stanford as an excellent opportunity. But for the next five or ten years, I'd rather have a niche laid out for me. There is a certain amount of strength in 'mass', and I can see that Stanford-Biology is making good sense in concentrating on experimental embryology. I'm not very well able to judge the natural-history angles~~///~~; if that line can be strong these days, it probably is. I'm trying to suggest the possibility that Stanford might be relatively more attractive to you than to me, but you have to judge that.

I should also mention Dave Perkins, whom I've known since Columbia. He is a solid, spund geneticist--- he's concentrated a long time on mapping and tetrad analysis ---and he might get to do even better work with the kind of physiologic~~all~~ stimulation you could give him.

If you could somehow get out here pdq it would be refreshing to be able to cry in each other's beer. I'll have to scrape a little to raise it in a hurry, but I can guarantee your fare too. (I know the Biol. Div. had asked you in style). I wish I could offer a return favor, but it doesn't seem possible now. We have to get these decisions made before end of February, and as we probably are leaving here on March 6 we'd probably miss your flight west. If you think you could make an extra trip to Madison, give me a week or ten days to arrange a seminar date, and just come. We'll be looking forward to seeing you, and have lots of room at the house.

Sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg